

A high-level monthly briefing on operations and activities at the U.S. Department of Energy's Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory – Home of Science and Engineering Solutions. Work at the lab advances the Department's strategic goals in the areas of energy, environment, defense and science.

■ ENERGY – Global Energy Experts Gather in Idaho

Representatives from the 11-member Generation IV International Forum (GIF) Policy Group held a meeting in Idaho in mid-May to develop the framework of agreements that will govern the international research collaborations needed for the development of the next generation of nuclear energy systems. The Policy Group is the GIF's governing body, and is responsible for overall framework, policy formation and strategic planning. Membership is drawn from the United States, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Euratom, France, Japan, Korea, South Africa, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Ralph Bennett, INEEL Advanced Nuclear Energy director and technical director of the GIF, said he was pleased the group selected Idaho as a meeting location. "They all know the new Idaho National Laboratory, including both INEEL and ANL-W, will be a centerpiece for nuclear energy research," Bennett explained.

■ ENVIRONMENT – Biodiesel Helps INEEL Fleet Run Cleaner

The INEEL is in the first phase of a test program to integrate biodiesel fuel into its transportation fleet. "Biodiesel has many advantages for our fleet and our environment – including the reduction in particulates released to the atmosphere and the lessening of our dependence on Mideast oil. We are beginning to see a decrease in fuel consumption," said INEEL Alternate Fuels Program Manager Philip Hayman. Nontoxic and biodegradable biodiesel is suitable for use in fragile environments. It also has been shown to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as public health risks associated with air pollution. Biodiesel contains only trace amounts of sulfur, typically less than the new Environmental Protection Agency standards that will go into effect in 2006 for diesel fuel.

■ DEFENSE – INEEL-Designed Munitions Assessment System Begins Operation

Last month, the Pine Bluff Arsenal Munitions Assessment System began operations to assess and characterize recovered chemical munitions stored at the Pine Bluff Arsenal in Pine Bluff, Ark. Due to the variety of non-stockpile chemical materiel located at the arsenal, the U.S. Army must first confirm the contents of drums and individual munitions before it can select the treatment and disposal alternative that best protects the environment, and the health and safety of workers and the public. The INEEL-designed and -fabricated Munitions Assessment System is a one-of-a-kind series of stainless steel vapor confinement and support modules that assists the Army with the assessment of the materiel, some of which dates back to World War I.

■ SCIENCE – Experienced Leader Named INEEL Lab Director

The board of managers of Bechtel BWXT Idaho, the company that manages the INEEL for the U.S. Department of Energy, has appointed Paul Kearns, Ph.D., a respected scientist with a lengthy pedigree as a successful technology administrator, to the position of Laboratory Director. Kearns has been with the INEEL since 1999, initially serving as associate laboratory director of Environmental Technology and Engineering. In May 2001, his responsibilities broadened as he was tapped to serve as vice president and deputy laboratory director. Kearns attended Purdue University, where he completed a bachelor's degree in environmental sciences, a master's degree in bionucleonics and a doctorate in health sciences.

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